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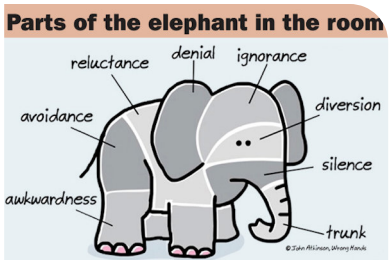
Candles, Salsa, and Song: Sharing Music in Kenosha

It matters that we encourage singing and songwriting expression. When our voice is stopped, it has big ramifications for whether we feel we have a place in the world. What would it be like in our classrooms if we encouraged children to keep developing their innate songwriting ability, just as we encourage other forms of writing? Page 3.



Making Friends With the Elephant in the Room, Part 1

My graduate school professor casually mentioned that "Five Little Monkeys" and "Miss Mary Mack" were among many children's songs and rhymes with a *racist* background. At first, I thought I had misheard her. Page 14.

Grieving Together in These Times

How can we acknowledge and care for these members of our community in an appropriate way during a time of such personal loss? I have been asking myself questions about grief all summer. Page 25.

It's You I Like

Fred Rogers speaks to me as he has spoken to my daughters and as he speaks to millions of children in homes and day care centers each morning, and with the same effect. Page 29.

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This little zipper song from Ted Warmbrand says so very much in so few words. Page 32.

I Love All of Me

“This song was birthed out of my wanting children to see the beauty in themselves as a whole. As you share it, it warms my heart to know that my music of love is being spread.” Page 34.

No More Us and Them

“The lyrics are not only a plea for the kids to work together, but also a challenge to myself to be more connected to the other and less self-centered.” Page 38.

Candles, Salsa, and Song: Sharing Music in Kenosha

by Sarah Pirtle[1]

A series of surprising turns reconnected me with Rhonda Lopez, the principal of Wilson Elementary School in Kenosha, Wisconsin. She asked me to sing with kindergarten through third graders and bring the community-building songs she'd seen me use years ago. For decades, Rhonda has worked with *Linking Up*, a 350-page book and CD of 46 songs, half bilingual in Spanish and English. I created this resource for Educators for Social Responsibility, a nonprofit organization that is now known as Engaging Schools. These songs emphasize talking things out, caring, and cooperating.

I discovered that the children and I could connect heart to heart through singing and songwriting, despite using Zoom and despite entering into their lives at a time of great upheaval.

I'd like to share new songs I created that made it possible for children to add their thoughts, as well as offer other songs that help build interconnection. I hope these will be useful in your own work.

Summer 2020 in Kenosha

Before COVID, the needs were already great at Wilson School. Nearby Racine is described as the worst place in the United States to raise a black child. (Comen 2019[2]) The city of Kenosha moved into national news when Jacob Blake was shot in the back by a policeman on August 23, 2020. Daily peaceful protests focused attention on racism and support for Black Lives Matter.

Then busloads of armed militia vigilantes began to arrive from out of town. Five days later, a thousand National Guard members were sent by the state. Rhonda clarifies:

> The protesting started out as peaceful. Once out-of-town vigilantes and other unknown groups began to arrive, riots were incited, and then these people, the out-of-town people—not our local protestors—began to vandalize, break windows, and firebomb. Their goal was to make it look like [the damage was caused by] the protestors. The National Guard did not shoot anyone, although they did use tear gas. The National Guard was sent in to control the out-of-town vigilantes and those there to incite. It was very complicated.

The neighborhood around the school was firebombed, and the losses included the local clinic and the Family Dollar store that people counted on. All in all, a hundred buildings in Kenosha were impacted by an estimated $50 million in damages. As school got ready to start, tensions across the city were high. Every window in the high school had been broken. On a day when Rhonda prepared for school to re-open, she was seeking support.

How the Invitation Happened

Across Kenosha, people were looking for ways to heal, and Rhonda's daughter, Maya, was busy painting one of the plywood coverings over a burned-out building near the school. A passer-by said to Maya, "Thanks for making our city beautiful again." As Maya painted faces on the mural, she had in mind a line from one of my songs, "We are made of the colors of earth." Suddenly Maya was inspired to tell her mother, "Call Sarah. I bet she can help."

Maya paints faces on a boarded-up building.

Rhonda says:

> Maya's inspiration for this mural was actually your song because I sang [it] to her all the time as a baby and as she grew up. Maya's skin color is so much darker than mine, and I was concerned she might wonder why our skin colors were so different. "The Colors of Earth" taught her from a very young age, before all the ugliness of the world's bigoted ideas had any chance to be rooted into her pure little heart, that all colors are unique and beautiful, and come from nature, so they are good. She told me that her mural is what she always imagined the song meant, what she saw in her head when we sang it. Our different colors are as

> beautiful as the rainbow is to the sky. It is the first thing she thought of when she decided to use her gift of art to help heal our community. She just said she wished they could all hear the song that made such an impact on her.

Rhonda Lopez and I hadn't talked for over twenty years, since the time that I stayed at her house in New Mexico for a week while leading music and bilingual education. She told me that, ever since she learned them from me, she had used these methods for teaching students to talk things out through song.

> We called you that day because I wanted to make sure it was all right with you if we used your song on a mural, and I wanted to make sure you knew how important your work had been in my daughter's life, a beautiful woman of color who is now a first-year teacher in a town being torn apart by racial injustice. I wanted you to know how much your work mattered to me and my family, and all the kids who I had the privilege to share it with over the last twenty-five years. I was desperate to go back to that place that I had been when we were first singing together and feel that peaceful feeling again. I wanted that for my students in Kenosha.

That day, we talked for three hours. "We are in a caring and determined community," Rhonda said.

At the end of the call, I told her, "I'm in. I want to work together. I want to give you more family." I was ready to begin a music residency. At first, I thought I would fly to Kenosha, and then we realized it had to be online. This October, the first phase began—five days of classes for kindergarten through third-grade students.

Leading Music Meetings for "Kenosha Kindness"

"People in Kenosha must feel unstrung," a CMN friend said to me as I began planning for the sessions. "What will be possible for you to bring?" I told her that I knew I wanted to send the message to each student, "You are a worthwhile person; always believe that."

The first two weeks of October were an optional enrichment period for Kenosha students, which made that time ideal for this music program. During five sessions, I worked on Zoom with seventeen kindergarten and first-grade students for thirty minutes, and eighteen second- and third-grade students for forty minutes. The students were seated at desks in their classroom and used one large classroom screen and built-in camera.

My goals were:

1. Connect – Reach out to them as specific individuals.
2. Calm – Use songs that calm their nervous system and build safety.
3. Move – Provide movement songs.
4. Center – Transition by playing a wooden flute.
5. Write together – Provide song patterns where they add words to affirm their feelings and thoughts.
6. Clear closing – Share affirming words as out goes the candle.

Connect

I lit a candle at the start of every class. As I held it up, I told them, "Being with you is very special for me, so I want to light a special candle." Each class time, I used one of these two starting songs to provide a way for us to see each other very concretely, although we were using Zoom. I like to use songs that describe movements and then transition back from moving to stillness, like placing their hands on their hearts. Students can choose to move from their chairs or stand up by their desks. Listen to the "Kenosha Kindness Songs" recording at the end of the article to hear these tunes.

I light a candle to say hello.
I light a candle to say hello.
Wave and wave and back again.
I light a candle for you, my friend.
I light a candle for you, my friend.

To individualize, I asked three children at a time to come close to the camera. They said their names and I introduced myself. Sincerely, I built a feeling that I really cared about meeting them.

I sang the song and changed the third line to give them a chance to move. Meanwhile, all the other students were also moving by their desks.

Here are other movement invitations:

Wave and wave and turn around again.
Stretch as high as you can and come down again.
Make ocean waves high and low again.

Another starting song is this one that I wrote for kindergarten and first grade:

Even Though We Are Far Away
words and music by Sarah Pirtle
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I wave to you, and you wave to me. Even though we're far away.
(hands go apart and then return placing them on heart)
I wave to you and you wave to me. Even though we're far away.
(hands apart then on heart)

And we can shine, shine, shine. Yes, we can shine, shine, shine.
(big dancing movements)
Oh, we can shine, shine, shine, and come together. Come together.
(hands return to heart)

Additional verses:

I see you and you see me.
I reach to you and you reach to me.
I shake my hands and you shake your hands.
I circle you and you circle me. *(draw circles in the air)*
We hold our hands. *(squeeze one hand and then the other)*
I rub my hands. *(very gentle soothing touch)*
I shine my hands. *(flicking)*
I give a hug and you give a hug. *(hug yourself)*

Calm

Teachers had named the series *Kenosha Kindness*. Early in every class, we used a song I wrote called "One Kind Word," which travels through the seasons. The hand movements begin with rubbing hands and singing, "One kind word can warm the coldest winter." Follow the link for a description of the whole sequence of movements for "One Kind Word."[3]

Move

On the first day, I taught them my song, "My Roots Go Down,"[4] and encouraged them to make up new verses. They answer the question "What animal would you like to be, and what would you be doing?" Jahnalla said, "I am a cheetah under a tree." Blake said, "I am a bear sleeping in a cave." Desmond said, "I'm a lazy cat, happy and warm." We repeated their words and sang them as a separate verse.

When singing this as a group, children can stand by their desks and simultaneously everyone becomes the animal their classmate has chosen. The second stage is to travel away and dance in a shared space after making a promise, "careful of each other as you move around." As a call-back signal, I sing, "Come on back where you started from," to the same tune. The *Linking Up* book has more details about how to work with unexpected situations using this song.

Both "My Roots Go Down" and their favorite movement game—being a bird hatching from an egg—are described on the recording of "Kenosha Kindness Songs." The bird game adds an Arapaho song, "Wearing my Long Wing Feathers." If you use that song, it's important to add more information about Native heritage and culture. Kenosha is on the homeland of the Potawatomi, and I am writing in Western Massachusetts from the homeland of the Pocumtuck nation.

Write

What are they ready to explore? Here are three different directions:

<u>News</u>

I say, "Come up to the camera and tell me some news." For example, a boy told me that he slipped at home and hurt his knee. Use any tune that is familiar to you. I often use "Even When We're Far Away" but substitute the phrase "We care about you." Here's how I worked with his words:

> Bretson fell down at home and his knee got hurt.
> We care about you.
> Bretson fell down at home and his knee got hurt.
> Sorry that it happened to you.
> *(Invent a response to correspond to the news.)*

The teacher selects three children to take a turn. More than that during a half hour challenges their ability to focus. But singing their news can be part of each day, and they can anticipate having a turn in the future.

<u>Make Up a Song About Something in the Life of the Classroom</u>

The class of second and third graders decided to write about the school sign they were painting. I asked them to take turns describing what the words meant: "All are welcome here." The line in the italics below got zipped in for the different verses from what they said. (Hear it on "Kenosha Kindness Songs.")

Kenosha students with the school welcome sign

Everybody Is Welcome Here (Hear it on "Kenosha Kindess Songs")
by Wilson School second and third grade

Everybody is welcome here. *(clap, clap)*
Everybody is welcome here. *(clap, clap)*
When a new person comes, we help them to feel welcome.
We are welcome.

Everybody is welcome here. *(clap, clap)*
Everybody is welcome here. *(clap, clap)*
We want you to feel safe and comfortable.
We are welcome.

Everybody is welcome here. *(clap, clap)*
Everybody is welcome here. *(clap, clap)*
When we play we include you.
We are welcome.
We are welcome.

Give Them a Choice of Sentence Starters That Express Concerns

I wanted the students to have an opportunity to express feelings and gave them a choice.

1. To introduce songwriting, I sang them a song written by children their age. (Hear it on "Kenosha Kindness Songs.")

   Will you be my friend? Will you be my friend?
   Please say yes, please say yes.
   I hope you'll be my friend.

I asked, "What do you think the person answered?" After they guessed, I sang the next verse.

Yes, I'll be your friend. Yes, I'll be your friend.
Yes, I want to be with you.
Yes, I'll be your friend.

2. Then I offered them the chance to write a song. They voted on whether they wanted to work with sentences that began "Sometimes I worry" or "It can be hard sometimes" and chose the latter. They used the question "What can be hard?"
3. The classroom teacher was asked to go up to those students who wanted to add words and write them to me in the chat. The teacher who collects the words needs to be welcoming of each person's expression and give an equal response, affirming all rather than praising some.
4. I also added a positive direction as a sentence starter: "What can make things better?"
5. I took their phrases and on the spot assembled related thoughts to make verses. They clapped for each verse in appreciation of the contributions.
6. I added a refrain they could learn to sing and repeat: "I will help."
7. As a follow-up, at a later time the classroom teacher can read the words back to them and remind them that all the words came from them, while the children draw. They can draw what someone else said or what they said. They can show their drawings to each other.

I Will Help You (Hear it on "Kenosha Kindness Songs")
by Wilson School kindergarten and first grade

Verse
It can be hard sometimes to hang up a jacket.
It can be hard sometimes to zip it up.
But if someone helps, that makes it better.
I will help, I will help, I will help you, too. (2x)

It can be hard to throw a ball in a hoop.
It can be hard to run really fast
And then try to stop without falling down.
I will help, I will help, I will help you, too. (2x)

Bridge
It can be hard to not get hurt.
I don't want my feelings hurt, and I don't want my body hurt.
I will help.

It can be hard sometimes to tell people that you love them
because you want them to know they really matter.
You want them to know they make a difference.
I will help, I will help, I will help you, too. (2x)

Closing Candle

Before I blow it out, I say "You have a light inside you. Who you are really matters. I'm really glad to be singing with you and getting to know you." The key thing is to find the words in the moment from how I really feel, and how much I really care. At the end, we count to three, and they watch the candle being blown out. We say with our hands on our hearts, "I carry the flame."

Classes Share in a Zoom Assembly

This was important for closure. On the fifth meeting at the end of four days of classes, we came together to share what we had been doing in a twenty-minute assembly of two classes. I lit a candle at the start and blew it out at the end.

1. We all sang, "One Kind Word."
2. K/1st grade presented their song, "I Can Help."
3. 2nd/3rd grades presented their song, "Everybody Is Welcome Here."
4. We sang the Salsa Song about their school garden.

Technical Note: What to Do If Their Sound Goes Off

If you teach online classes, one of the problems you should prepare for is not being able to hear what students are saying. Sometimes they can hear and see you and you can see them, but you don't know what they are saying because they can't turn their sound on.

Here's what I did. I asked a teacher to write their names really big on separate pieces of paper so they could hold their names in front of themselves. They took turns coming to the camera and showing their name. Then I made up a song sequence for them to dance to individually (to the tune of "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes"):

> Karmelo's dancing with a 1, 2, 3.

I also found that we could still do songwriting. Even when I couldn't hear them speaking, they could vote on a song prompt, and the teachers could still collect their words and write them in the chat. That's how that frustrating situation can be handled.

The Value of Songwriting

It matters that we encourage singing and songwriting expression. When our voice is stopped, it has big ramifications for whether we feel we have a place in the world. What would it be like in our classrooms if we encouraged children to keep developing their innate songwriting ability, just as we encourage other forms of writing? We would help them access an overlooked mode of exploring the world, processing information, and placing themselves in community.

In the 1980s, I created a book and cassette called *Songwriting Together: Cooperative Songwriting to Build Closeness with the Earth and Each Other*. I offered twenty-three song patterns to use in a cooperative learning format where all students add contributions in small groups to create verses. In this resource, I also gave general advice about teaching songwriting. For instance, I addressed helping all people be part of singing. I wrote:

> Teachers are encouraged to never apologize for their voices as this implies that it is valid to label "good" and "bad voices." Instead we can sing open-throated and open-hearted without the constriction of feeling judged. If we think of singing in a cooperative vein rather than competitive or hierarchical, then we can enjoy the natural voice each person has and make sure all are valued for their own way of singing.

I have been teaching songwriting at CMN events since 1989, when I led the first CMN songwriting workshop. At that workshop, Michael Ekster commented, "Whoever asked us to write a song when we were kids?" That workshop was attended by a dozen adult songwriters, and as we took turns reflecting, we realized every person in the room had experienced some kind of wounding directed toward their musical intelligence. Each had received painful criticism of their songs and their singing. Many felt they had been pressured to perform in ways that felt hurtful or disrespectful.

Sally Rogers asked me how much the song leader should take an active role in forming the song. I said, "Make room for the young people to do as much of it as they can." In the graduate school music classes I taught at Lesley University for twenty years, I wanted the teachers to think of teaching songwriting as an essential vehicle for communication.

When it came to the Kenosha residency, I hoped open-ended songwriting could give students an opportunity to express what was upsetting and concerning them. I also knew that people of all ages need to take time to build trust before they want to share what is hard. The Zoom format curtailed the kind of interaction that helps songs bubble up in a group, but I hit upon the idea of giving choices for sentence starters and having them vote. Kindergarten and first grade chose the question "What is hard right now?" You'll notice in the lyrics cited above that the first respondents mentioned things very close at hand, like difficulty with a jacket. But later members of the class ventured to refer to larger problems, like wanting to be sure they were safe. The second- and third-grade class was offered that same choice but steered toward a positive declaration: "Everybody is welcome here."

I encourage teachers to see three aspects of the songwriting process with students on a continuum that ranges from lots of teacher guidance to youth initiated. We try to give them as much power as possible in the writing.

1. Regarding theme and topic:

Students use an idea given, or vote between choices, or students entirely shape the topic with their suggestions.

2. Regarding wording of the song:

Students add phrases that the adult leader inserts in the pattern, or independently make verses in small groups.

3. Regarding the melody:

Students work with a known melody or help guide the leader as to the feel of the song or choose between two tune directions that the teacher suggests or they entirely make their own tune.

In terms of how songwriting can contribute, I also keep my eye out for meaningful events in the school. I like to pull these forward and affirm them by writing a song.

The Salsa Song

The school garden went unpicked during COVID. Returning in the fall, children found little tomatoes growing from the compost pile. A student named Amber shouted, "Jackpot!" when they were able to pick a hundred. The tomatoes became the basis for salsa. The garden is a

crucial part of Wilson School as well as the focus that Rhonda Lopez puts on nutritional equity. With a city-wide grant, fruits and vegetables are delivered to the school. I wrote this song and all classes learned it.

The Salsa Song
words and music by Sarah Pirtle
© 2020 Sarah Pirtle

Where did you get that salsa? Where did you get that salsa?
It's made from the tomatoes in the garden of Wilson School.
La la la la la la. La la la la la la.
It's made from the tomatoes in the garden of Wilson School.

Where did you get those tomatoes? Where did you get those tomatoes?
They grew from the compost pile in the garden of Wilson School.
La la la la la la. La la la la la la.
They grew from the compost pile in the garden of Wilson School.

Where did you get that compost? Where did you get that compost?
It piled up from the food scraps from the children of Wilson School.
La la la la la la. La la la la la la.
It piled up from the food scraps from the children of Wilson School.

One hundred tomatoes on that twisty vine
Make two full bowls piled in a line.
We cried out "Jackpot! What a find,"
from the garden of Wilson School.

Where did you get that salsa? Where did you get that salsa?
Mrs. Lopez made it from the tomatoes in the garden of Wilson School.
La la la la la la. La la la la la la.
Mrs. Lopez made it from the tomatoes
in the garden of Wilson School.

Support for a School Medical Cot

I wanted to help the school in other ways. They had a dire medical need. Children not only had no nurse and no nurse's room, but when they were sick, there was no place to lie down. They had to sit in a plastic chair. Fourteen-year-old Sanza Parzybok from Northampton, Massachusetts, announced she wanted to help. Sanza is part of a weekly racial justice gathering online for young women in Western Massachusetts that I've led weekly since early July. In non-pandemic times, Sanza and her friends would have been meeting in the summer for the teen session of a feminist social justice camp called Moonseed that I've been leading for twenty-seven years as part of Journey Camp. During COVID, we started meeting by Zoom as "A Long Line of Women Leaders for Racial Justice."

When the national news was filled with stories of Kenosha, I shared with Long Line the first preparations for starting music classes there. Sanza said that her family had been hand-painting Black Lives Matter signs and giving them away. They decided to make more and sell them to raise money for Wilson School. Sanza's family raised $400. Her mother, Brooksley Williams, said, "This has been such a satisfying project, and we have gotten wonderful feedback from friends and neighbors."

Rhonda summarizes:

> It has been a light in the darkness, and it has fueled my hope that people are good, and that things will get better eventually, even in a town as damaged and hurting as Kenosha. Today I put my first sick little child up on the cot you sent us. He slept there for two hours, rolled up in a soft blanket sent by another of my dear friends offering to contribute, while he waited for someone to pick him up. I was so comforted seeing him have a soft, comfortable place to sleep instead of the hard plastic chair that was there before. That cot made a difference in his life today and will make a difference over and over again for years to come. Please let those who contributed know how much their gift means to us at Wilson.

On a final note, Rhonda adds that for the first time in a long time she is hearing children singing as they walk down the halls of the school.

"Kenosha Kindness Songs" by Sarah Pirtle

These songs are sung one after another in this order:

1. "Light a Candle to Say Hello"
2. "Even Though We're Far Away"
3. "One Kind Word"
4. "Everybody is Welcome Here" (songwriting structure)
5. "I Will Help You" (songwriting structure)
6. "How Can We Be Friends Again?" (songwriting structure)
7. "Will You Be My Friend?"
8. The Bird in the Nest Game
   This includes the Arapaho song "Wearing My Long Wing Feathers"
9. "My Roots Go Down"

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1. https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/authors/sarah-pirtle.aspx
2. https://247wallst.com/special-report/2019/11/05/the-worst-cities-for-black-americans-5/2
3. https://sarahpirtle.com/hope-sings/one-kind-word.htm
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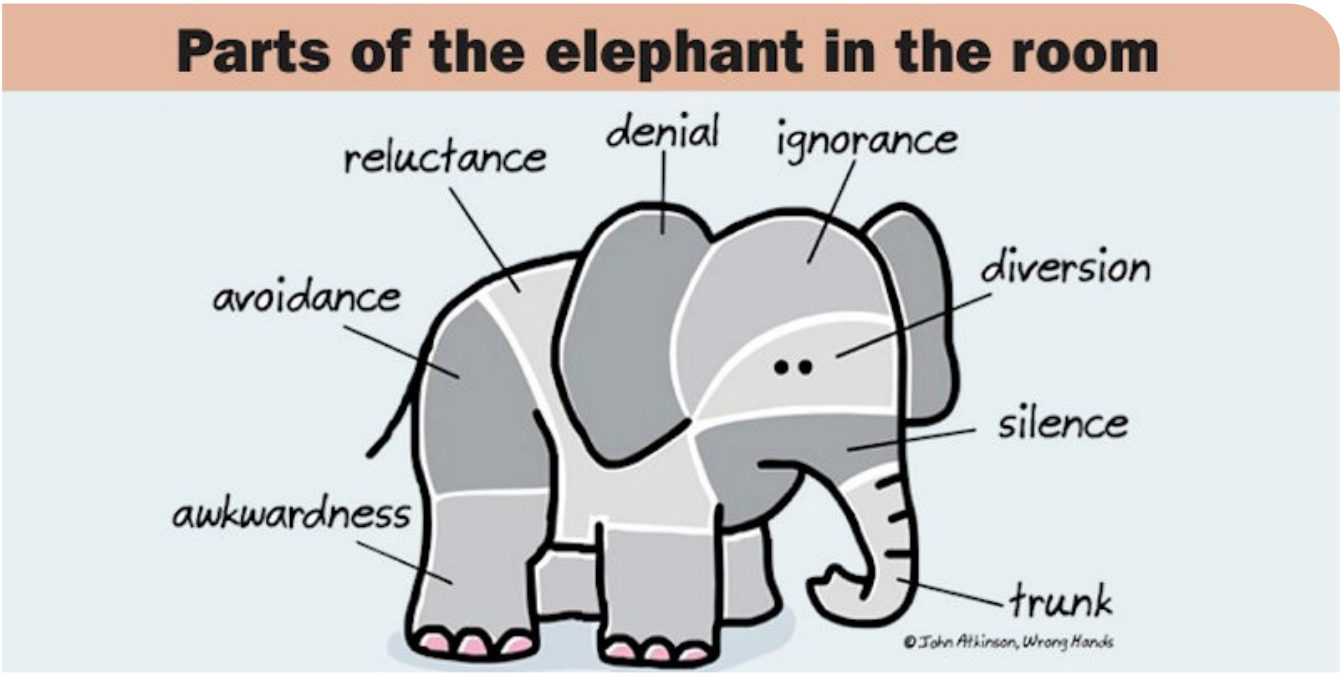

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Making Friends With the Elephant in the Room, Part 1

by Lisa Heintz[1]

A Few of My Favorite Things

I remember the day my graduate school professor, a woman I considered a mentor, casually mentioned in class that "Five Little Monkeys" and "Miss Mary Mack" (both also available as song picture books) were among many children's songs and rhymes with a *racist* background. At first, I thought I had misheard her. "The words to 'Eeny, Meeny, Minie, Moe' originally included the n-word," she continued. (How could that be? I'd known that rhyme my whole life and it only referred to a tiger!). She concluded, rather abruptly, with, "So you really should be aware that some of the songs and rhymes you may be tempted to use in your classroom may not be appropriate."

My professor had, in one brief comment, completely upended everything I thought I knew about songs, rhymes, and folk songs for children. It has taken me nearly twenty years to reckon with this notion. Over the years, I have continued to seek more information, discussed the topic of "racist music" with colleagues, friends, and mentors, and spent a great deal of time trying to understand my role in ending—or perpetuating—music with such a negative history.

To be clear, racism is not the only bugaboo related to songs we find in homes and classrooms across the nation. A growing list of other familiar songs and rhymes rooted in racism, slavery, minstrelsy and other forms of discrimination whose original lyrics (or the knowledge thereof) continue to promote stereotypes may be found here: Discriminatory Children's Traditional/Folk Songs[2].

Across many conversations and emails with peers, mentors, and fellow parents, I have heard numerous responses to this uncomfortable issue (I'll stick with racism as the example, though you could replace racism with other -isms, i.e., forms of oppression, discrimination, and disenfranchisement), among which include:

I changed the lyrics so it doesn't sound racist anymore.

If no one knows the original meaning, how can it harm them?

It's such a great song/rhyme! I use it all the time, and no one's complained. The kids love it! Why should I give it up?

It's an important historical lesson best taught through song.

> **"If I were a racist,**
> **I'd teach reggae music and Bob Marley,**
> **'Stir It Up,' but never 'War.'**
> **I might even mention marijuana . . .**
> **. . . If I were a racist,**
> **I'd know that,**
> **Even though the notes may be black,**
> **The spaces would remain white."**
>
> —from "If I Were a Racist"[3] by Nate Holder[4]

I don't believe in banning or censorship (more currently referred to as a "cancel culture," whereby anything seen as racist must be banned, stricken, removed, or publicly denounced). *If we ban songs like this, the next generation is destined to repeat our racist actions because they won't have learned the important lessons from the past.*

You're overthinking this! Why does everything have to be about race?

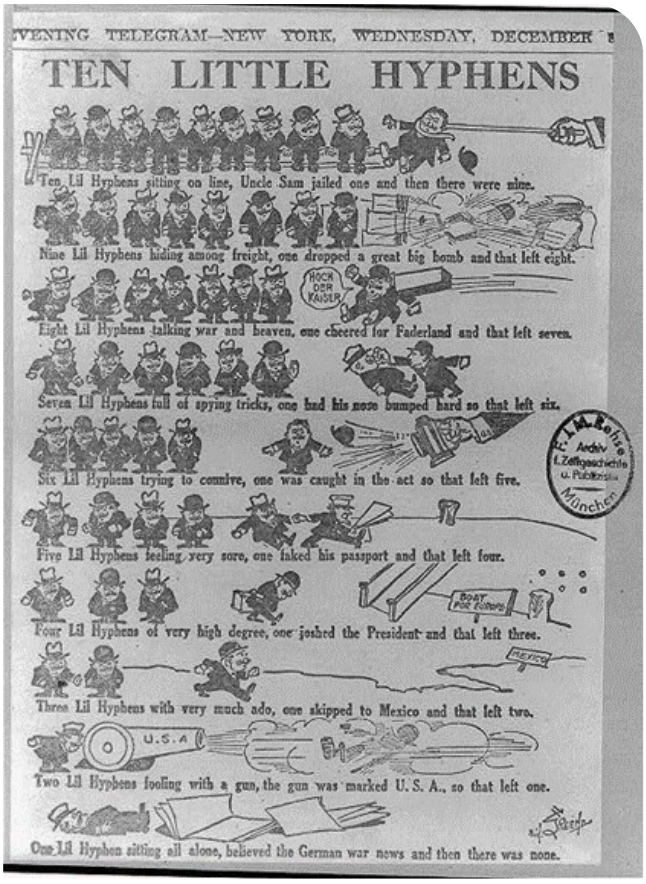
All these responses reflect the thinking of many white people—even some people of color—in the United States who grew up with these songs and never realized (or took seriously) the songs' racist origins. To suggest that a teacher, parent, or artist stop using these songs is often taken as an affront to their self-identity *(I'm not racist, so it doesn't apply to me)* and sense of musical integrity *(These songs represent our cultural heritage and belong in our national repertoire. Otherwise, it's censorship).*

People Get Ready . . .

For those of us who use music to teach children, it is impossible to consider the potentially racist impact of music without considering the impact of what's going on in our country (and world) right now regarding racism and other forms of discrimination that are so prevalent. While the deaths of black people at the hands of white police officers has created an exponential sense of urgency in regards to understanding racism, implicit bias, and white fragility (the defensiveness of white people when confronted with the role of whites in racial injustice or inequality), we must also acknowledge that our country has had white supremacy and systemic racism in varying degrees since it began, beyond the Civil War, and racial tensions beyond the Civil Rights movement, including these examples:

- indigenous people slaughtered for their land by whites/colonists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;
- the Chinese Massacre following the Gold Rush of 1871, in which a mob of 500 whites and Mexicans robbed and killed residents of LA's Chinatown;

- anti-immigrant laws and riots between various immigrant groups (e.g., Italians, Irish, Puerto Ricans, through much of the twentieth century);
- anti-German propaganda during World Wars I and II, such that there became a "war on hyphens"—the hyphen (e.g., German-American) indicating a sense of duplicity, or worse, a lack of loyalty to, or betrayal of, the United States;
- Japanese-American and German-American Internment camps during WWII;
- most recently, the nationwide protests by the Black Lives Matter supporters of all races that inspired similar protests worldwide.


EVENING TELEGRAM—NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER
TEN LITTLE HYPHENS
Ten Lil Hyphens sitting on line, Uncle Sam jailed one and then there were nine.
Nine Lil Hyphens hiding among freight, one dropped a great big bomb and that left eight.
HOCH DER KAISER
Eight Lil Hyphens talking war and heaven, one cheered for Faderland and that left seven.
Seven Lil Hyphens full of spying tricks, one had his nose bumped hard so that left six.
Six Lil Hyphens trying to connive, one was caught in the act so that left five.
Five Lil Hyphens feeling very sore, one faked his passport and that left four.
Four Lil Hyphens of very high degree, one joshed the President and that left three.
MEXICO
Three Lil Hyphens with very much ado, one skipped to Mexico and that left two.
U.S.A
Two Lil Hyphens fooling with a gun, the gun was marked U. S. A., so that left one.
One Lil Hyphen sitting all alone, believed the German war news and then there was none.

Sydney J. Greene, Dec. 1915. Retrieved from the Library of Congress[5]

To suggest the recent social upheavals are somehow new, prompted by a particularly contentious time in politics, a psychological response to long-term quarantine, or that something has "changed" to suddenly make people of color so upset, belies the awful truth: We've been in this spot for a long time, and *we are all in this together*, for as long as it takes—and that does not refer to the virus that has accosted our world.

While the complexities of systemic racism are difficult to address fully in one article, what we can do is focus on ways to move toward a goal to help build up one another as professionals while building up our students through the work we do with children and music based on a few vital assumptions:

1) Racism exists in our everyday lives.

Regardless of whether you view the cause as systemic, classist, power centrist, media influenced, social, economic, or simply how people were raised, racist acts occur every day, and are perpetuated by many people *of all races* (though primarily by whites, as the largest group of oppressors) both knowingly and unknowingly. Here are just a few examples:

A. In switching to online teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak, we immediately realized that our educational system does not accommodate students without access to digital devices and consistent Wi-Fi as learning tools. At the very root of that disparity is racism, which is now impacting yet another generation of children's education in a powerfully negative way. The potential is great for perpetuating this educational divide into future generations as the educational system is reevaluated.

B. You may have heard, overheard, laughed at, or even participated in the telling of jokes that put a particular ethnic group, religion, race, or culture as the brunt of the joke. Perhaps you felt the brunt of the joke, or perhaps the joke referenced someone else's culture or community. The playground is where many of us learned racial and ethnic slurs and stereotypes. As children, we absorbed all that damaging (and inaccurate) information. It is only through broader life experience and a willingness to challenge our own expectations that we learn to recognize those seemingly harmless jokes as cruel

aspersions. But simply not repeating racist jokes is not enough; we must shift our intent (to do no harm) into *impact* by *speaking out against perpetuating such slurs*. The ghosts of the playground become the specters of *complicit* adults when not called out for what they are.

C. Where I live, a new kind of aspersion is cast on what locals refer to as *Apartment Kids*—children residing in controlled rent (aka Section 8) housing in our upper middle-class school district. Despite the fact that the majority of parents there are working, participate eagerly in school functions, and are as supportive of their school-age children as parents in the surrounding neighborhoods, many white people deride these families for "bringing down property values," "leaving their kids to run wild," and "not caring." It's inaccurate, racist, classist; and children are watching and listening to the adults who purport all that, just as we had when we were kids.

D. "*I don't see color*" and "*We are all part of the human race*." These are, at their root, statements that ignore one's implicit bias by suggesting that the color of someone's skin makes no difference at all. It actually goes further, by implying that one's race or ethnic experience is not valuable, not worthy of being celebrated or respected as unique. But even those with less pigment want to acknowledge—and be acknowledged for—the special qualities that help make them who they are. We all know that race is not invisible, so it is only logical to *acknowledge all our unique stories*.

2) We all have biases.

This is true for black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) as well as non-BIPOC. Implicit, explicit, ingrained, situational, or lifelong, we all have them, despite our best intentions or wishes. Pretending otherwise slows down the process of getting to our better selves.

3) No single group/organization of people is monolithic.

As a parent of a child on the autism spectrum, there is a common saying used to describe the similar and yet very unique characteristics of such children: "If you've met one child with autism, you've met one child with autism." And so it is with groups of people, whether associated by race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, class, etc.—no group speaks for or represents *all* people within that same group. Hence the challenge of understanding the dos and don'ts of these conversations! It is these discomforting sticking points that keep that elephant in our classrooms.

4) If you are reading this and you are white, you are probably *non*-racist . . .

. . . even if your family once owned slaves, or you have cousins who still say "colored people." Some scholars believe that the "opposite of 'racist' isn't 'not racist.' It is 'anti-racist.'" (Kendi 2019[6]). *Non-racist* refers to the *passive* rejection of racist ideology (Hodson 2016[7]). Furthermore, no one is saying "all whites are bad." White people tend to feel defensive when the barrage of talk is about all the negative impact whites have had on people of color in our country, but that is just part of learning to "lean in" to the conversation and hear marginalized people. It is necessary to first put down defenses before one can really listen.

This is not about placing blame on whites or pushing whites' guilt into action. The point is to acknowledge the myriad ways racism seeps into everyday life without white people recognizing it or calling it what it is, and the many ways they inadvertently perpetuate racism.

Although it is an incredibly bitter pill to swallow, after much soul-searching and learning, I can acknowledge that I am not racist, but I have benefitted from racism. While racism is an institution, not a person, that is not to say that no person is or can be racist (we know they can be, and are). It is the actions of racist individuals and groups—as well as the passive "non-racists"—who perpetuate the institution of racism, while preserving the benefits of racism for whites. This is not something I say, or feel, lightly. To be called *racist* is immediately horrifying to those of us with a conscience (I know this is you) and makes us feel defensive. The term *racist* bears vast semantic complexities, and, to make discussions more challenging, its social definition has morphed over the past years from being an overt action to being so ubiquitous as to not be recognizable (McWhorter 2019[8]).

While the semantics may vary from person to person, group to group, I accept the notion that I am part of a racist infrastructure and society. For me, that means even though I grew up fairly poor in a single-parent family when divorce was taboo, I have experienced privileges, transgression oversight, friendlier public interactions, the benefit of the doubt, and the freedom to shop without being followed—actions usually not afforded people of color in the same situations. For example:

A. I've been able to learn about the positive contributions of my race in school—specifically, in textbooks—while avoiding most mentions of any nefarious activities of my people. And there is no special month designated for this—it's always White Month!
B. The children's books I grew up with always reflected kids who looked, thought, lived, and acted much like me.
C. The media I follow positively reflects people of my race while frequently highlighting the travesties occurring in neighborhoods that are predominantly minority, or maligning people of color, before an investigation of a crime has even begun.
D. If I search "beauty" in Google Images I'll find the majority of images are of white women (no men), though in the last couple of years more women of color have been added to the results. That said, we now realize that Google and other online platforms tailor results to best fit the person using it. Perhaps what you see will be different? Try it and find out!
E. Even the subtleties of language are used to disparage or defend, depending on bias (see image below). These are but a few of the "privileges" of being white in the United States and around the globe.

Because I am just beginning this journey to comprehend what racism means to me, to my community, and for our future, I also recognize that my ideas or actions may sometimes still reflect my experience within that racist system. I am trying to move from my passive non-racist thoughts and actions to those that will uplift and support people of color as well as other disenfranchised groups who've had little in the way of equity.

The term *racist* means one who is *actively engaged in prejudice or antagonism—whether intentionally or passively—against people based on their race, color, or ethnicity*. As you read and communicate more with other people, you may choose a different term, but based on my experience thus far (subject to further enlightenment), this is the term I have chosen to use and how I think it pertains to me and all who embark on this path.

I am not actively or knowingly engaged in prejudiced behaviors. At the most basic level—the very beginning of this journey toward reckoning—I am non-racist. I do not intentionally or actively believe in the inferiority of other people due to race (or anything else, for that matter). That said, it is important to note that even people who do not intentionally (*explicit bias*) behave in racist ways can still be racist without realizing or acknowledging it (*implicit*

bias). Of course, I believe that being a non-racist is better than being an active racist—but it is still too passive a position to make any real difference; even tacit complicity perpetuates racist systems. I must accept the challenge to do more than be non-racist. Although there is a learning curve and I know I will continue to get some things wrong, in fact, I'm working very hard to identify, acknowledge, and eliminate those unconscious biases in my personal and professional life. My ultimate goal: Moving beyond non-racist toward anti-racist.

I am an individual woman; I am not all women.

I am responsible for my actions; not for those of previous or other racists.

I am an individual white, but I do not represent all whites.

Used by permission from Mark Weinecke, Des Moines, IA via Twitter

I have been indoctrinated into a racist system of education, employment, economy, housing, representation, and social networks that most benefit whites; but I am not all racists.

I cannot make up for all the injustices of the past; I can act to prevent them from continuing.

5) Music has the capacity to touch, move, and impact people at their most emotional and vulnerable levels.

That's why we're all here.

Breaking Up Is Hard to Do

"First do no harm" is an ethical mandate usually attributed to the Hippocratic oath taken by doctors, and often cited as a directive for people in all types of helping professions, including education. The intent of an action (teaching a song, reading a book, sharing an artifact, etc.) must be to honor and respect the culture and people, though we know intent is not sufficient to pardon us from potential harm. Therefore, we must be confident that the possibility for good substantially outweighs the potential for causing damage. This is, I believe, a good way to consider our decisions about what songs to include or exclude in our repertoire, and how we will approach teaching about cultures outside our own.

While white people may be tempted to keep a song in their collection because it suits them for various reasons, white people must acknowledge that they are not at the center of the potential damage. Consider who actually hears the songs we teach to children: Classmates, parents, grandparents, other relatives, neighbors, teachers, students, concert-goers of all ages and backgrounds, administrators, friends . . . anyone with whom the children come into contact may well hear the songs we teach being sung either casually or formally.

While students may not actually know the sordid history of a song, it is likely that the adults around them do. Is the potential benefit of teaching kids to sing "Pick a Bale o' Cotton" greater than the possible damage if children learn the racist origins from the other adults in

their lives? If you've changed the lyrics of "Five Little Monkeys" to "Five Little Robots" but the tune or chant is the same, are you confident that no one outside of the classroom will recognize the tune and be hurt?

So much folk music relies not on the written score and lyrics, but on *oral tradition*. I think it is safe to assume that parents, grandparents, and older relatives (at least) will likely recognize the rhyme or tune even without monkeys in the lyric. In just one such instance from an Iowa school in 2019, a black parent's complaint (based on her daughter's concern) required a last-minute removal of "Pick a Bale o' Cotton" from a spring choral concert that was "highlighting periods of American history" (Richardson 2019[9]).

If we are not only to "do no harm" but also weigh the potential harm versus good, it seems easier to comprehend the depth of pain that the melody of a song can bring to someone who has experienced that song through a very different lens. Just as some songs provide joyous memories and feelings, particularly for those of us working with music and humans, songs with negative associations evoke pain that is impossible to ignore.

> **"The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony as it is in Music where many different notes blend together in making the perfect chord."**
> —'Abdu'l-Bahá

This is where understanding "intent" and "impact" is critical. *Intent* is self-centered (I) and explains what you planned to have happen that may (or may not) have worked out as expected. *Impact* has a broader view (we) and is the resulting change created by your intentions (Armstrong 2020). You may have *intended* to be ready to leave for work on time, but you are running late. The *impact* is that you're late, your first session of the day had to be cancelled or postponed, you've inconvenienced the other people involved, and you've set a negative tone for the day not only for yourself, but for the others who were inconvenienced by your lateness.

There are so many possibilities and variables involved in determining what songs to include in your repertoire for work with children. Unfortunately, I don't have the answers, either! But I can share Thinking Points (or Talking Points, if you can find someone to share them with) that may help you consider your choices, perhaps through a new and different lens. This is intended for *anyone* who works with children and music; I used "Music Educator" as the broadest role that might encompass us all. Click the title to view the checklist. And join me next time for Part II of this article, focusing on working toward culturally responsive teaching.

A Thinking Music Educator's Checklist for Multicultural Unbiased Music[10]

I would like to acknowledge the insight and expertise shared with me by the people who took considerable time to review this article for content as well as form: Jocelyn Armstrong, Dorothy Cresswell, Ginger Lazarus, Lynne Lyon, Kaitlin McGaw, Sarah Narayana, Susan Salidor, Devin Walker, Lolita Walker, Ashley Wise, Ceylon Wise.

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Grieving Together in These Times

by Kari Thomas Kovick[1]

At the end of our fantastic CMN conference, I was saddened to learn that David and Jenny Heitler-Klevens had been hosting and executing it full throttle when they got the news that David's father had died. How can we acknowledge and care for these members of our community in an appropriate way during a time of such personal loss? I have been asking myself questions about grief all summer.

One month ago, a parent who has attended my classes since her son was an infant PM'ed me on Facebook. "Do you have any thoughts on talking about death with young ones?" The family was offering palliative care at home to their cat, Spencer, who was in a late stage of kidney disease. This mother, Emily, was concerned that three-year-old Francis would need help processing the loss. "He is very sensitive and very verbally communicative," she shared.

I passed on a few links I found with a quick search and suggested a few tips I had learned from my teaching experience. I told her to look for books she could read to Francis (she found *When a Pet Dies*, by Fred Rogers[2]) and suggested she introduce him to the idea of the life cycle. I had discovered when teaching a gardening education program that this concept reflects the natural truth for children. "All plants and animals have a cycle of birth and death. And at least with plants, you can see that they come back again after they go to seed," I said hopefully. I also shared what I had observed in my students over the years, that young children may not cognitively process death like we adults do, but they will feel the feelings surrounding the death. "Especially," I wanted her to know, "Francis will be feeling how you are feeling."

As Emily told me more of the story, it became clear that it might not be Francis, but Mama who needed help in holding the grief she was feeling. Spencer, the cat, had been with her for over ten years, and they shared a significant connection going back to a very vulnerable time in her life. "I was twenty-four or twenty-five and seriously ill. He sat on my lap for nine

months of daily IVs. He's the most affectionate pet I've ever had . . . I will be the most upset adult," she admitted. "I already am."

Searching for words that might comfort her, I said "It's OK to be sad. Just acknowledge that and do some kind of ritual to say goodbye. I know you will get through this, but I know it will be hard. You have loved Spencer for so long."

I related to Emily's pain. I had been "midwifing death," as she called it, all summer, in my own way. The collision of the pandemic with the Black Lives Matter movement felt like it had pulled the rug out from under me. My work, my family, and my community had all been shaken by changes and losses beyond my control, and I was struggling hard to find my place of groundedness and stability. Sometimes it felt illogically deep and vast, like I was feeling the pain of something much bigger than my personal life's story.

I was blessed to stumble across two thought leaders who helped to bring me comfort and make sense of myself during this time. One was Thomas Hübl, whose online Collective Trauma Summit 2020[3] I happened to catch in late September. Hübl, a spiritual activist who has helped thousands of Germans and Israelis to face and heal the cultural shadow left by the Holocaust, reminded me that we are exposed to news 24/7 that shows in vivid detail that our entire planet is suffering. How can we be alive in these times and not feel traumatized? Deep down in our spiritual being, he assured me, we know that we are all connected, and that our well-being depends on staying connected to each other. Yet we live in a world that denies this and creates so much suffering as a result.

What impact does this have on a human being? When our innate sense of wholeness becomes fractured, Hübl explains, we cut ourselves off from feeling (our emotions, our body sensations) in order to survive the pain. Unfortunately, when we cut off from our pain, we cut off from our joy, and when we cut off from ourselves, we inevitably cut off from each other. Our own humanity becomes victim to our pain. This pattern goes back centuries, and has been passed on by generations, in a perpetuating cycle of compounding losses and abuses (Hübl 2018[4]).

What do we do? The cutting edge of grief work says that in order to feel whole again, we have to face the broken-heartedness that we so desperately do not want to feel. Francis Weller, a psychotherapist and author and another wise soul I have been blessed to discover in these times, says, "When we fully honor our many losses, our lives become more fully able to embody the wild joy that aches to leap from our hearts into the shimmering world. . . . Grief is essential to finding and maintaining a feeling of emotional intimacy with life, with one another, and with our own soul" (Weller 2015[5], xxii). He suggests that, like indigenous societies, we use meaningful rituals, a community of friends, and time in "benevolent solitude" to navigate our losses.

Most of us think of grief as the loss of a loved one who dies or leaves, but Weller outlines other losses that we must mourn. They might be the loss of a part of ourselves, the loss of our world, the loss of our dreams. Grief can also be felt in the deep remembrance in our bones that once upon a time, our ancestors did know a life of tribal connectedness, before it was robbed from them/us by patriarchy, colonialism, and slavery.

Can we dare to feel the anguish of the moment we are in and still be open to the beauty of our life and ourselves? With each other? It is not an easy prescription for healing, but it is a process that can bring us back in touch with our humanity if we allow the grief to take us there.

Weller says, "A mature person knows how to carry grief in one hand and gratitude in the other. When those two are together, we are in the prayer of life. . . . We need both to sustain this life" (Weller 2013[6]).

Emily seems to have known this intuitively. She messaged me two days after her request for advice with this story, which showed me what a profound difference it can make to stay open through grief:

> Our cat Spencer died this morning—a natural death at home. I was stroking his face when he took his final breaths, and my hand felt his final faint heartbeats. . . . Francis has been remarkable. He said, "Goodbye. I love you. I'm sorry," as he patted him right after he died. He looked at me and explained, "I used to be the sun before I came to Earth."
>
> Francis "helped" dig the grave and put dirt on the body. We sang songs. Francis gave Spencer a hug, said, "Ba-bye. I know you'll be home soon." Then Francis came inside and composed three different songs about the cat dying while playing his guitar. He asked lots of questions, some hard. ("Will Daddy die?" "Is Sophie, our dog, dead?") We have reassured him that only the cat died because the cat had kidney disease.
>
> I was with Spencer all night and this morning. The natural, unaided death of my beloved Spencer was profoundly devastating and profoundly beautiful. I'm tired. It's a whole new element, guiding a young child through loss while also traversing it myself.

No doubt, to share the reality of loss with an open heart is hard work. To pretend it did not matter much would be so much easier. But what Emily has taught her son Francis is that love is worth the hard work. There is profound beauty to be found when the heart keeps feeling, even through loss. Emily modeled for Francis how to be grateful for Spencer's life, even as she was letting go of it. She also showed her son that she can feel pain and still stay connected to him. In fact, sharing her grief deepened her connection to him. And Francis's love for his mama ("He gave *me* lots of hugs!") was a deep comfort to her, one more thing to take in and be grateful for.

In dark times, maybe this is the only way to remain fully alive: openheartedly, vulnerably, and together. If we can hold each other in our fear, our sorrow, and our loss, we can knit back together the sacred fabric of our relatedness. We may not regain our losses, but we may open our hearts to the fullness of life, and in that intimacy, feel grateful for all that we had and all that is still here. Praying, pressing hard at our hearts, the one hand of grief to the other hand of gratitude, I welcome us as a CMN community to offer this to each other, and to the world. David and Jenny, I hope you can feel us loving you. We care that you are hurting, and you are not alone.

Kari's song "On and On," a song for children about the cycle of life and death, can be found here (CD): https://www.heartofthechildmusic.com[7] *and here (digital download):* https://www.songsforteaching.com/store/on-and-on-song-download-with-lyrics-pr-62260.html[8] *and here (in* PIO!*):* https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/songs/on-and-on.aspx[9].

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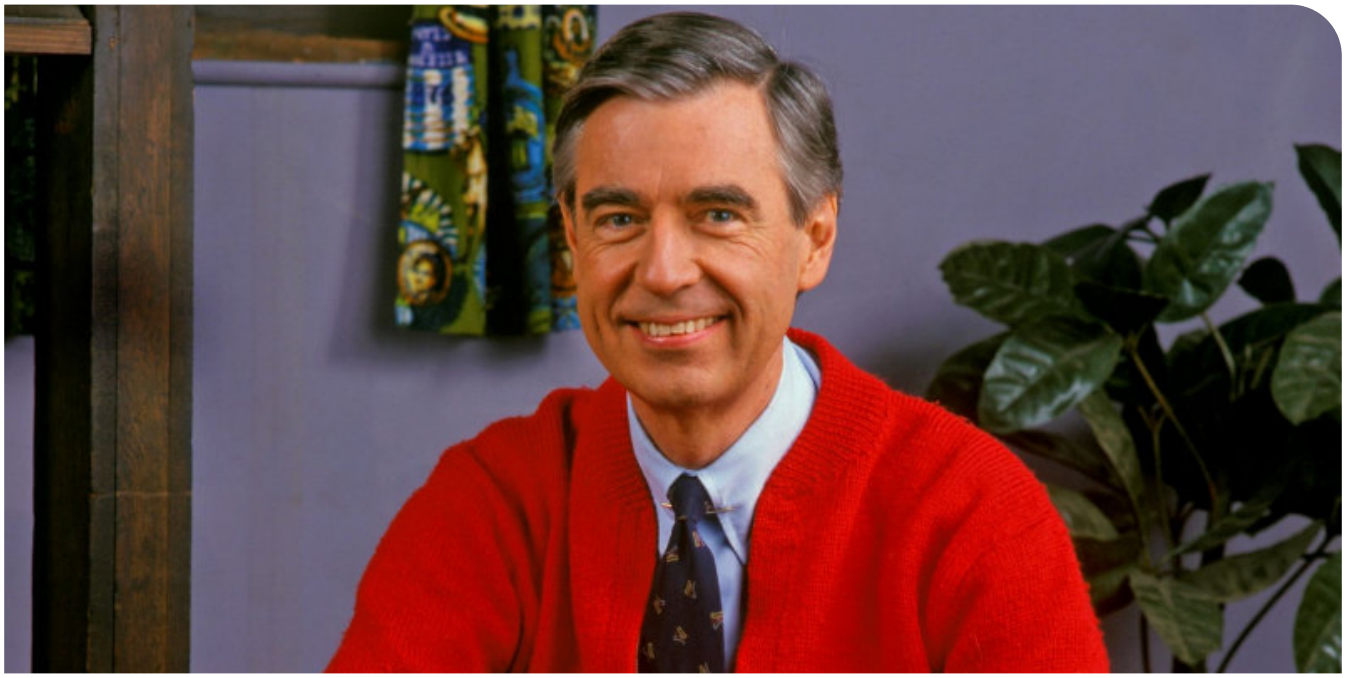

It's You I Like

words and music by Fred M. Rogers
© 1970 Fred M. Rogers

We love Mr. Rogers, recipient of our 2020 Magic Penny Award. And now, after all the movies and documentaries, we know that he absolutely was the genuine article, and he totally deserves our love. The following quotation from CMN member Phil Hoose's interview with Mr. Rogers[1], published in this journal in 1995 and 2017, says it all:

> Fred Rogers speaks to me as he has spoken to my daughters and as he speaks to millions of children in homes and day care centers each morning, and with the same effect. I am certain that there is no one on Earth with whom he would rather be talking. I am special. I am good. I am a Neighbor.

The Fred Rogers Center[2] graciously gave us permission to provide our members with the sheet music below. They also gave us permission to stream the MP3 of Fred Rogers performing the song live. Thank you, Fred Rogers Center, and Fred McFeely Rogers.

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1. https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/features/an-interview-with-fred-rogers.aspx
2. https://www.fredrogerscenter.org

It's You I Like

words and music by Fred M. Rogers
© 1970 Fred M. Rogers

B♭maj7 B♭6 Cm7 F7 Cm7
It's you I like. It's not the things you wear. It's not the way you

F7 Dm7 Gm7 E♭maj7 Am7(♭5) Dm7 Gm7
do your hair, but it's you I like. The way you are right now, the

Cm7 F7 B♭maj7 E♭maj7 Am7(♭5) D7 Gm7 Gm/C
way down deep in - side you, not the things that hide you, not your toys,

E♭/F B♭6 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7
they're just be - side you. But it's you I like, ev-'ry part of you. Your

Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7
skin, your eyes, your feel - ings wheth-er old or new. I hope that you'll re -

Adim D7 Gm7 C7 B♭/F
mem - ber e - ven when you're feel - ing blue, that it's you I like. It's

E♭/F F7 Dm7(♭5) G7 Cm7 F7 F7(♭9) B♭6
you your-self. It's you. It's you I like.

It’s you I like.
It’s not the things you wear.
It’s not the way you do your hair,
But it’s you I like.
The way you are right now,
The way down deep inside you,
Not the things that hide you,
Not your toys, they’re just beside you.
But it’s you I like,
Every part of you.
Your skin, your eyes, your feelings
Whether old or new.
I hope that you’ll remember
Even when you’re feeling blue,
That it’s you I like.
It’s you, yourself.
It’s you.

Just One Step

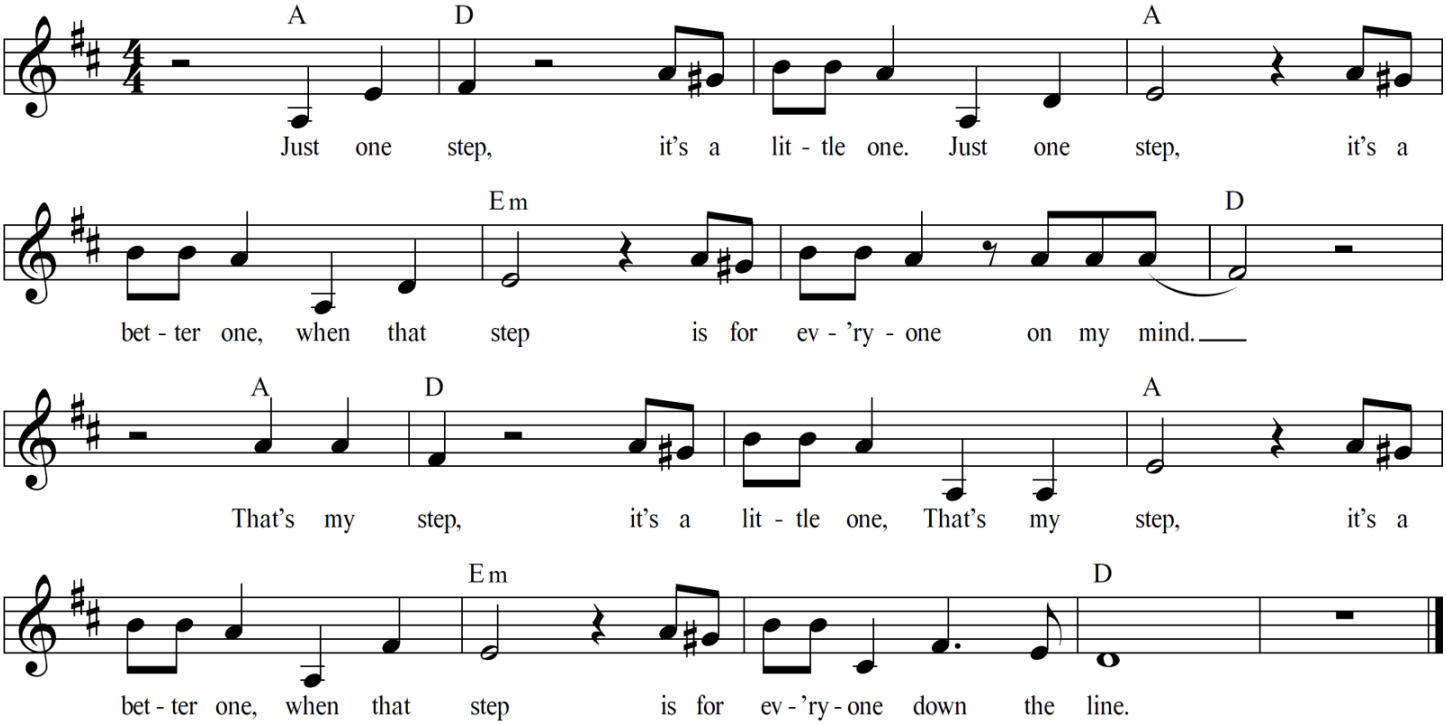
words and music by Ted Warmbrand
© 2019 Ted Warmbrand

This little zipper song from Ted Warmbrand says so very much in so few words. When asked if he would share it, Ted responded, "I am very grateful you feel my little modest musical meanderings are worth sharing with the world. Good luck on figuring out what notes I'm singing. Nancy Schimmel's daughter said it wasn't so much the song as the way it was sung. Oh, well . . .

"Every verse and time it's a bit different singing. I did try (but didn't always succeed) to drop the "a" in "it's a" down a half step for a special touch (as in Nat King Cole singing "Mona Lisa") but that would depend on how slow the song gets in the particular rendering. I think how you have it is clear and works better, especially if you note somehow that the melody is up to the singer to follow their feelings (given all the repetitions)."

We added the Mona Lisa-ish G sharps for Ted and note that the way he sings this song gives the little ditty a definite gravitas. Remember that Ted encourages you to make this song your own and to sing it from your core.

Just One Step

words and music by Ted Warmbrand
© 2019 Ted Warmbrand

A D A
Just one step, it's a lit - tle one. Just one step, it's a
Em D
bet - ter one, when that step is for ev - 'ry - one on my mind.
A D A
That's my step, it's a lit - tle one, That's my step, it's a
Em D
bet - ter one, when that step is for ev - 'ry - one down the line.

Verse
Just one step, it's a little one.
Just one step, it's a better one,
When that step is for everyone
On my mind.
That's my step, it's a little one.
That's my step, it's a better one,
When that step is for everyone
Down the line.

Zipper verses
Just one chance . . .
Just one world . . .
Just one dream . . .
Just one life . . .

I Love All of Me

words and music by Leroy Hyson[1]
© 2020 Leroy Hyson

Leroy Hyson is a children's music star in the Washington, D.C., area. A retired high school biology teacher and lifetime musician, Leroy writes and sings music guaranteed to get listeners involved. When asked if we could share one of his songs, Leroy answered, "I am honored to be able to share one of my newest songs, 'I Love All of Me.' This song was inspired by the book with the same title by Lorie Ann Grover, celebrating self-love in a very colorful picture board book for toddlers to pre-K. As part of my partnership with the Bus Boys and Poets Rise + Rhyme program [a Washington, D.C., eatery that features children's entertainers], I would often read a book as part of my show, and 'I Love All of Me' was birthed out of my wanting children to see the beauty in themselves as a whole. As you share this song, it warms my heart to know that my music of love is being spread."

---

1. https://www.hysonproductions.com

I Love All of Me

words and music by Leroy Hyson
© 2020 Leroy Hyson

D A G A

Can you point to your eyes? Can you point to your nose? Can you
point to your ears? Can you point to your toes? Can you, etc.

Chorus

D A G A D A G A

All of me, all of me. I love all of me. All of me, all of me. I love all of me.

D A G A D A G A

All of me, all of me. I love all of me. All of me, all of me. I love all of me. I

1. ***Verse 1***

Bm A G A Bm A G D

love my eyes. They can see all a-round me. I love my nose. It can smell lots of things. I

Bm A G A Bm A G A

love my ears. They can hear sounds a-round us. I love my toes. They can wig-gle when I sing.

2. ***Verse 2***

Bm A G A Bm A

love my hair, if it's bush - y, straight, or cur - ly. I love my chin. It's

G D Bm A G A Bm A

per-fect how it is. I love my cheeks. They move up and help me smile. I love my skin. Its

https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/i-love-all-of-me

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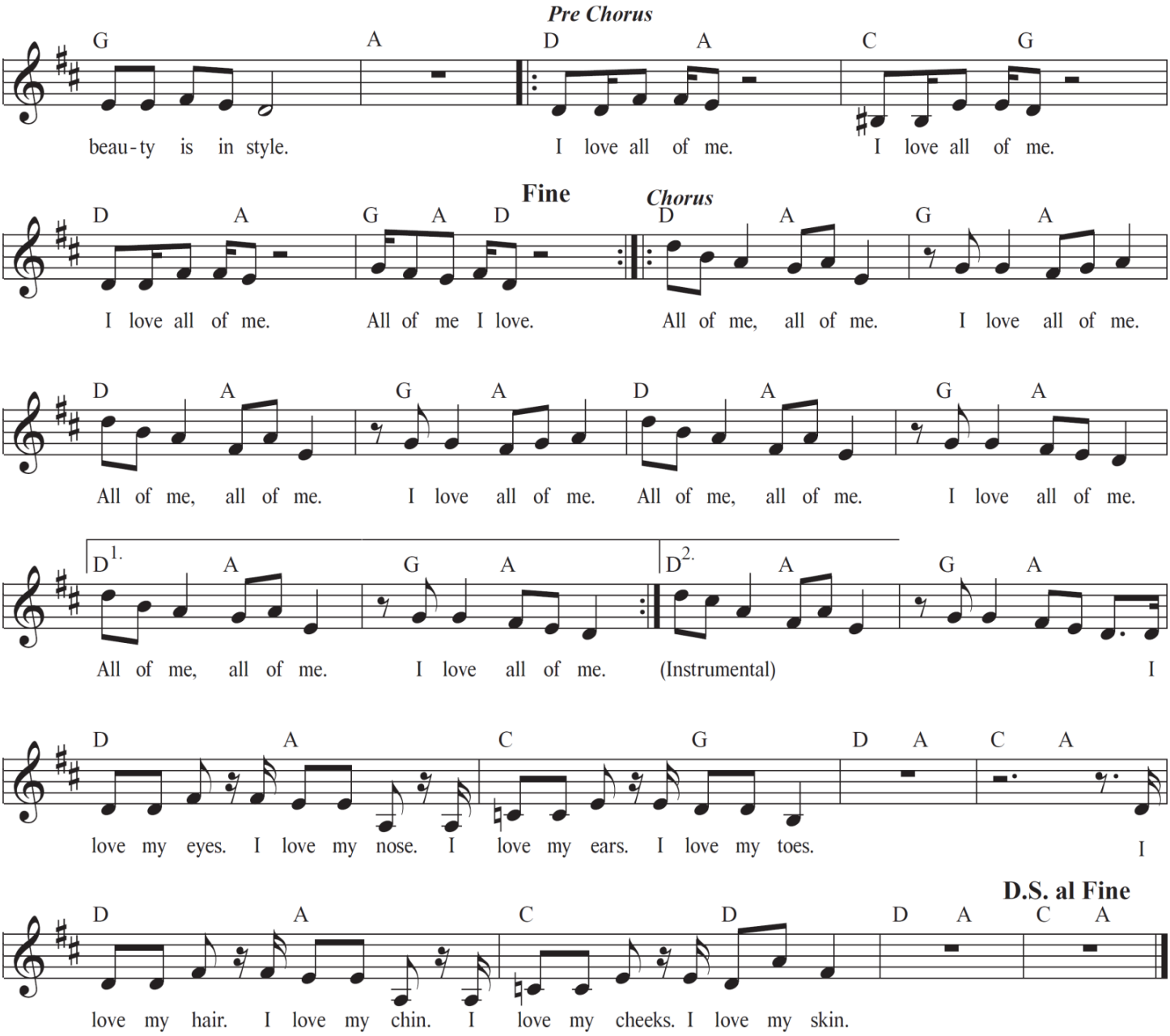
Pre Chorus
G A D A C G
beau-ty is in style. I love all of me. I love all of me.
Fine
Chorus
D A G A D D A G A
I love all of me. All of me I love. All of me, all of me. I love all of me.
D A G A D A G A
All of me, all of me. I love all of me. All of me, all of me. I love all of me.
D1. A G A D2. A G A
All of me, all of me. I love all of me. (Instrumental) I
D A C G D A C A
love my eyes. I love my nose. I love my ears. I love my toes. I
D.S. al Fine
D A C D D A C A
love my hair. I love my chin. I love my cheeks. I love my skin.

Spoken Introduction
Can you point to your eyes?
Can you point to your nose?
Can you point to your ears?
Can you point to your toes?
Can you point to your hair?
Can you point to your chin?
Can you point to your cheeks?
Can you point to your skin?

Chorus
All of me, all of me, I love all of me.
All of me, all of me, I love all of me.
All of me, all of me, I love all of me.
All of me, all of me, I love all of me.

Verse
I love my eyes. They can see all around me.
I love my nose. It can smell lots of things.
I love my ears. They can hear sounds around us.
I love my toes. They can wiggle when I sing.

Chorus

I love my hair, if it's bushy, straight, or curly.
I love my chin. It's perfect how it is.
I love my cheeks. They move up and help me smile.
I love my skin. Its beauty is in style.

Bridge
I love all of me. I love all of me.
I love all of me. All of me I love.
I love all of me. I love all of me.
I love all of me. All of me I love.

Chorus

Coda
I love my eyes. I love my nose.
I love my ears. I love my toes.
I love my hair. I love my chin.
I love my cheeks. I love my skin
I love all of me.
I love all of me.
I love all of me.
All of me I love. (*repeat and fade*)

No More Us and Them

words and music by Rodney Whittenberg[1]
© 2016 Melodyvision Publishing

One of Rodney's satisfied customers, Phyllis Chapell, a singer and band leader, says, "Rodney Whittenberg is truly one of a kind, with so many gifts that it is unbelievable. He has the creativity and imagination to envision a project and the skills and talents necessary to achieve and produce wondrous results. Can't speak enough about Rodney's gifts, and beyond that, he is a personable, charming, generous, loving spirit!"

When asked about the genesis of this song, Rodney wrote:

"In 1991, I had started working for the Banner Project as music director and would later become executive director of the Anti-Violence Anti-Drug Arts education program. At the same time, I was doing personal growth work in therapy. On the wall in the therapy office was the phrase 'No more us and them; let's talk about we.' For many weeks I would see this phrase on the wall. I don't know when it happened, but I was playing around with the Rolling Stones song 'I'm Free,' the Soup Dragons version. While playing around with it, 'No More Us and Them' came out. It became a song I must have sung with thousands of kids throughout the nineties. We had set up a big anti-drug and violence rally in the courtyard in City Hall in Philadelphia. I had a thousand kids singing it with me. We shut down the courts and all business at City Hall for an hour.

"A few years ago, I was writing and producing the recording *We Stood Up,* a celebration of the Civil Rights Movement and I asked legendary singer Sarah Dash to sing the song. For those of you who don't know, Sarah was a founding member of Labell with Pattie Labell and background vocalist for Keith Richards's solo band X-Pensive Winos. In the nineties, I arranged 'No More Us and Them' with kind of an island vibe. With Sarah Dash, we produced a straight-up rocker.

“I think the lyrics were not only a plea for the kids to work together, but also a challenge to myself to be more connected to the other and less self-centered. It was a call to action and a reminder of what can be done when we work together rather than against each other. I have tried since then to live by those words, always trying to build a collective. Why do I like this song? I think any time you can get a message, a tune that rocks together, it makes me happy.”

---

1. https://www.melodyvisionrecording.com

No More Us and Them

words and music by Rodney Whittenberg

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Chorus **To Coda**

E A E A E A E A

No more us and them. Let's talk a-bout WE, you and me.

Verse 1

E A Bm7 A E A

I'm on the left, and you're on the right. Each one of us feels that each

Bm7 A E A Bm7 A

one of us is right. We call each o - ther names and be - gin to fight. We

E A Bm7 A

draw lines that sep - a - rate red, yel - low black and white.

Verse 2

E A Bm7 A

We could build a world where we could fly so high.

E A Bm7 A E A

We could find a cure where no more would die. We could build a shel - ter for

Bm7 A E A Bm7 A

all of us to live. Us and them may take but we could learn how to give.

https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/no-more-us-and-them

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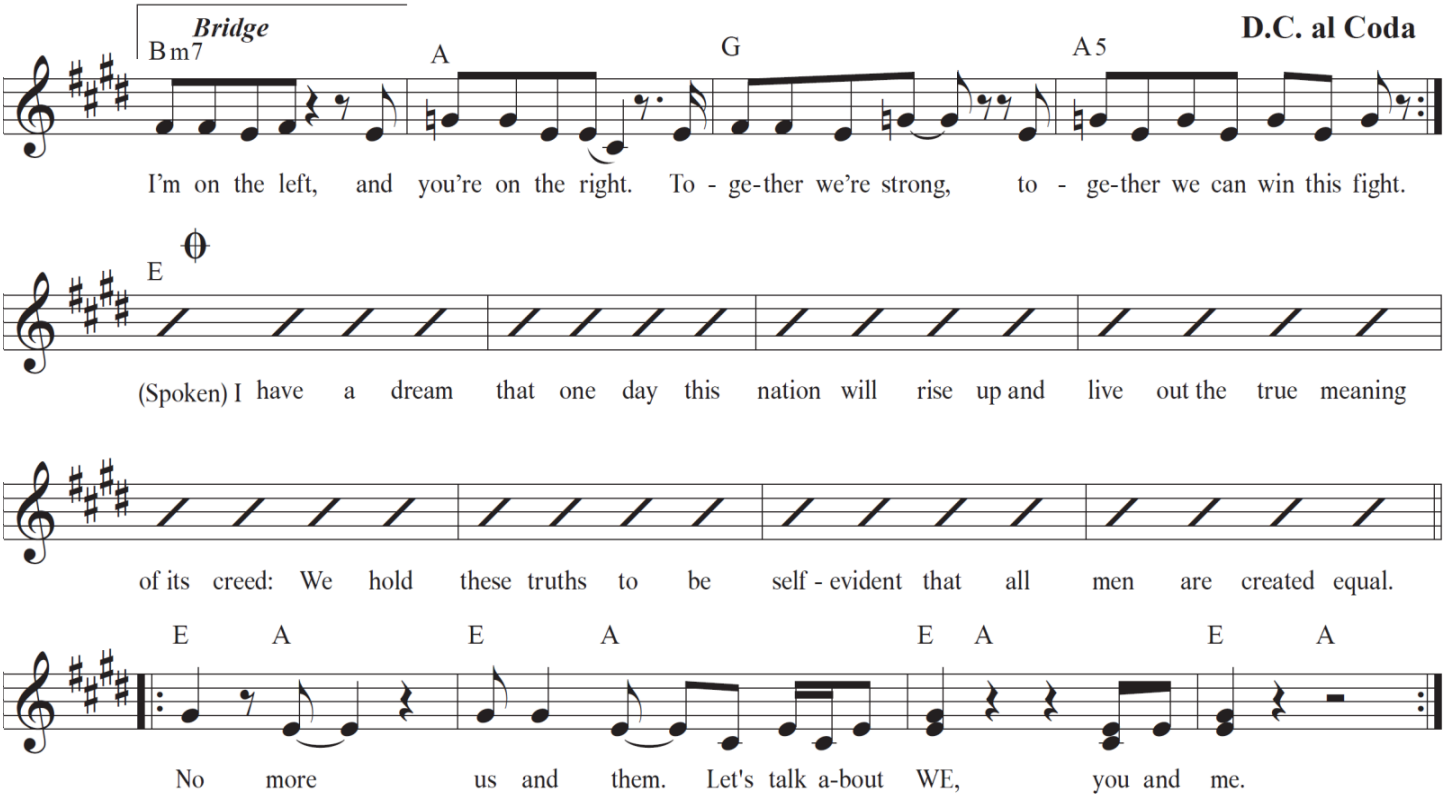

Bridge
D.C. al Coda
Bm7
A
G
A5
I'm on the left, and you're on the right. To - ge-ther we're strong, to - ge-ther we can win this fight.
E
(Spoken) I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning
of its creed: We hold these truths to be self - evident that all men are created equal.
E A E A E A E A
No more us and them. Let's talk a-bout WE, you and me.

Chorus
No more us and them.
Let's talk about WE
You and me. (*repeat*)

Verse
I'm on the left and you're on the right.
Each one of us feels that each one of us is right.
We call each other names and begin to fight.
We draw lines that separate red, yellow, black, and white.

Chorus

We could build a world where we could fly so high.
We could find a cure where no more would die.
We could build a shelter for all of us to live.
Us and them may take but we could learn how to give.

Chorus

Bridge
I'm on the left and you're on the right.
Together we're strong, together we could win this fight.

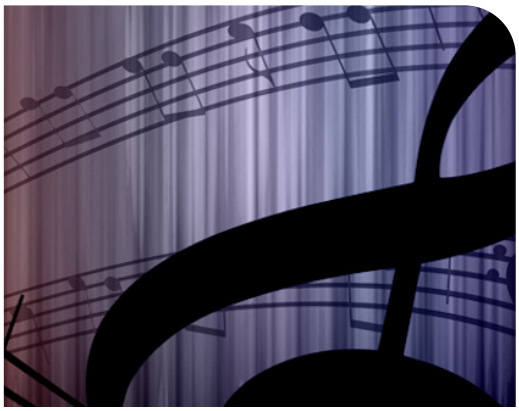
Chorus

Coda
(Spoken) I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

No more us and them.
Let's talk about WE
You and me. (*repeat and fade)*

About PIO!

Pass It On! publishes thoughtful, informative articles on children's music, empowering those who teach, write, perform, share, and produce it to strengthen their craft and their advocacy. All articles are open to the public, providing CMN members and the wider community with news about exciting programs, music history, business tips, and in-depth interviews with music legends. Our songs for children —serious and silly, traditional and brand new, for all ages and from all over the world—are meant to be learned and shared.



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Articles

Pass It On! always needs stories from members about what they're doing and how they're doing it. If you are a CMN member, you are invited to share your story. After all, that's the whole point of CMN.

Songs

Most of the songs published in *Pass It On!* are contributed by CMN members, and we welcome songs written by people from various parts of the continent or the world. Please share your works with us.

Interested? Read our guidelines for submission[8] to *Pass It On!*

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